AfterMath

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Whoever despises the high wisdom of mathematics nourishes himself on delusion and will never still the sophistic sciences whose only product is an eternal uproar.

Leonardo da Vinci

Faculty Comings and Goings

Two faculty join us this academic year: **Laurene Fausett**, *Ad Interim* Associate Professor of Mathematics and **Yelin Ou**, *Ad Interim* Assistant Professor of Mathematics; more on them below. We also welcome back **Heather Burkham,** who continues within the department as Lecturer, supporting the developmental math program. We said a sad farewell to two of the department's faculty: **John Davenport** retired from teaching, while **Italo Simonelli** took a position with McDaniel College outside Baltimore, Maryland. We wish both John and Italo all the best.

Laurene (and husband Don and dogs Charlie Brown and Dori) came to Texas from Statesboro, Georgia. Laurene previously taught at Georgia Southern, the University of South Carolina Aiken, and Florida Institute of Technology (as well as one year while on sabbatical at the Naval Postgraduate School). Her BA is from UC Berkeley, and her PhD is from the University of Wyoming. Her main areas of research are artificial neural networks, numerical analysis, and numerical modeling. She has given talks in Bulgaria, Egypt, Mexico, Poland, and Turkey. She is busily finishing her 5th textbook. One of the texts was translated into Korean. She has 4 children (and 4 grandaughters!). Laurene enjoys (and sometimes teaches) Pilates and Yoga; she also plays viola in a string ensemble in Sulphur Springs. Welcome Laurene!

Yelin received his PhD from the University of Oklahoma in 2005, and spent the last year at the University of California Riverside as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Before arriving in the US in 2000, Yelin taught mathematics at Guangxi University for Nationalities in China, and had extensive experience as a visiting scholar to universities and research institutes in England, France, and Italy. His field is differential geometry, and he has published over 15 research papers in top journals. He has also won six teaching awards including a designation as one of the "Excellent Teachers of China", and three research awards. He is a reviewer for the AMS's Mathematical Reviews, and the European Mathematical Society's Zentralblatt. His current work is in harmonic maps—energy-minimizing maps between manifolds equipped with Riemannian metrics—between certain model spaces, wherein he studies the implications of existence of such maps, some ways to construct them, and some ways to help classify them. Welcome Yelin!

The department also welcomes the following new graduate assistants: **Ahmad Abdallah**, **Cody Fisher**, **Caleb Grisham**, **Mark Stellpflug, Renee Townsend** (who teach Intermediate Algebra—Math 131—and assist with supplemental instruction duties), and **Vivek Koden.** Continuing as teaching assistants are **Shannon Kratzmeyer**, **Jodi Laroe**, and **Holly Stovall**; **Patrick Rose** continues as a nonteaching GA, covering many of the calculus tutorials. Adjuncts this year are **Tom Faulkenberry** and **Jody Sheppard** in Commerce, and **Shari Beck,** and **Brenda Reed** in Corsicana.

Departmental Grants

Vanessa Huse has received $338,254 for two, twenty-six month, Teacher Quality Professional Development grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the Dana Center. Vanessa serves as director, and **Shari** will serve as the Co-director. Corsicana-area schools will send two or three teachers each (K-8) for training on the Navarro Campus. **Eileen Faulkenberry** received $85,000 for another Teacher Quality Grant, "Concepts and Instructional Strategies for Algebraic Thinking". This grant is based in Commerce and involves 23 area teachers, who each receive over $500 of books and materials to take back into their classrooms. The grant's purpose is to increase teachers' subject matter knowledge as well as ways of implementing innovative teaching strategies into their classrooms, in order to provide a learning environment in which all students can succeed. **Eileeen**, **Pam Webster**, and **Lymeda Singleton** were involved in a collaborative grant from the Texas Education Agency and worked with Region 4 Educational Service Center (based in Houston). The TEA grant "Teaching Mathematics TEKS Through Technology (TMT3)", was for almost $1million. They worked with staff from Region IV Educational Service Center to write and implement four modules (Middle School, Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry) and presented three "Trainer-of-Trainer" sessions (in Houston, Austin and San Antonio, reaching over 150 participants). These attendees—regional service center personnel or mathematics supervisors, from all over the state—then presented the professional development for teachers in their regions.

The department is also involved in two other grants. Operation Spark!, an outreach activity to schools in Commerce and Greenville, is a 3-year, $150,000 grant from L3Communications. The mathematics component includes having university students visit area schools in a cryptography "strand"—including giving prizes to kids if their group can decrypt various messages—and faculty are also involved in the open house for parents, and a Saturday workshop for high school kids. In addition, the department will soon be supporting a 1-year, $525,000 grant to the university for math and science outreach. The majority of the funds are for project-based learning, and a large chunk will go towards an intensive, four-week, summer math and science camp (targeting rural and economically disadvantated, but high-aptitude, area high

schoolers). If you are a teacher, or live in the area and have a middle or high school student who might benefit from these activities, let us know!

Developmental Math Update: This year in the Intermediate Algebra classes, we have implemented a mandatory workshop during the class period following all of our lecture classes. The workshop sessions are run by Supplemental Instructors who assist the students with their study skills and their grasp of the material. In this way, the students are required to attend a two-hour block of math that will, hopefully, assist them in passing the courses. We have also added a technological component to the course by integrating a software package known as My Math Lab. Students are now, in one way or another, taking homework and quizzes online. The program allows for immediate feedback and, on homework, multiple attempts on problems. So far the response to both of these changes has been rather positive. This is being overseen by **Pam**; last year the effort was led by **Lymeda**.

The Math Skills Center Update: This year, we are assisting students with online homework as well as tutoring them. In addition, the lab has become a focal point for many of the mathematics education courses. Four Ellison letter presses and many of the accompanying templates were purchased in an effort to get homemade manipulatives into the hands of future teachers. The Math Skills Center is currently housing the presses and the "die cuts", as well as the foam used to create the cut-outs. Any alumni who might be interested in using this resource would be welcome to come see us.

Mathematics Clubs and Student Highlights

In the last year, the Math Clubs have continued their tradition of eating well! In addition to monthly meetings where students are lured by offers of free food, the Math Clubs also hosted the Annual Math and Science picnic at the City Park. Almost 100 people enjoyed indulging on hamburgers, hot dogs, and other unhealthy treats. The clubs also ate well in the Heritage Room for their Spring Banquet, honoring students who joined the clubs in the last year. While the three traditional math clubs (Alpha Gamma Alpha, MAA, and Pi Mu Epsilon) are doing well, we are especially proud to have over 30 new student members in the Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The most recent math club activity was a get-together followed by a showing of "Proof" in the new planetarium. **Pam** continues as the faculty sponsor.

More Faculty and Staff-Related Updates

Emily Elizabeth Faulkenberry was born August 7, 2006 at 8:39 p.m. She weighed 7 lbs. 10 oz. and was 21 inches long.

Not to be outdone by **Eileen** and **Tom**, **Nikolay Sirakov** gave birth to the following journal article and conference proceedings: "A New Active Convex Hull Model For Image Regions" in the Journal of Mathematical Imaging and Vision; and "Multiple Surfaces Reconstruction from 2D Sections Using an increasing 2D Vector Flow" and (jointly with Italo Simonelli) "A New Automatic Concavities Extraction Model". **Hasan Coskun** submitted "Euler's pentagonal number theorem associated to root systems" to an AMS journal, and has applied for several research grants. **John Heath** and wife Marilyn married off their son, J.P. John Paul Heath and Lisa Capps were married June 10, 2006, at Harmony Hill Baptist Church in Lufkin , Texas. J.P. is sports director at ESPN 1260 in Lufkin and Lisa is an English teacher in the Diboll school system. J.P. is an A&M-Commerce graduate and Lisa is a graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. **Stuart Anderson** performed once again in the summer musical; this July's bluegrass and gospel comedy was "Smoke on the Mountain". Stuart was recognized this year in several ways, including as statewide Piper Professor, from the Minnie Piper Stevens Foundation—only two other faculty on campus have ever received this award. Stuart also was honored in April as the 2006 recipient of the Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics award of the Texas Section of the MAA. **Bill Aslan** has fully recovered from his contractor-roofer accident from last fall, and is enjoying his 40th year at the University and vows never to tell roofers what to do on his house anymore. (The annual math department holiday quiz had a history section, where the answers were famous mathematicians. One question, that only department insiders would understand, was simply "Where's Bill?" The answer: L'Hôpital.) **Heidi Wiseman** (formerly Staebler—Heidi married Ray Wiseman on November 4th) continues keeping busy teaching courses for future teachers and finishing her doctoral dissertation ("Problem Posing as a Pedagogical Strategy: A Teacher's Perspective"). **Charles Dorsett** had a paper published, "Covering Properties, Semi Regular Properties, and Extremely Disconnectedness," in the *Ultra Scientist Of Physical Sciences*, and a paper accepted by the *Bulletin Of The Calcutta Math. Soc.* entitled "New Characterizations Of Separation Axioms". **Vanessa** hosted a Pre-Service Teacher Education Course (presented by Dr. Mark Klespis from Sam Houston State University) this past September. She and **Shari** coauthored an article, "A Virtual Spin on the Teaching of Probability", that will be featured on the cover of the NCTM publication *Teaching Children Mathematics* in November. And **Vanessa** and **Brenda** just were informed that an article, "Techno-Zoo", appear in NCTM's *Online Journal for School Mathematics*. **Ricia Montgomery** traveled to Montana, Utah, and other points west during the summer with husband Kent and their three kids. She recently ran in the annual Bois D'Arc bash in town, finishing first in her demographic category, and was the second female overall. (And **Kay Hatfield** is still working in the local real estate markets, but is also working on campus in the Honors Program office.) **Rick Kreminski's computer** continues to do as it's told and compute. This summer, it found a nice 'loophole' in a venerable formula, Vieta's beautiful infinite product expansion for π (from the 16th century), and persuaded Rick to submit the result to a journal. Rick's computer was also asked to write an article for the new *Encylopedia of Measurement and Statistics* on Simpson's rule; apparently it's now in print. (Rick still spends most of his spare time pondering constitutional law, trademarks, and other topics legal.)

Alumni Updates

Please drop us a line to let us know how you're doing! **Dinh Truong** reports that he is still working for Compaq (now HP) in the Austin area. **Brandon Barrier** has been doing a lot of traveling for Raytheon (including a rough 6-week assignment in Hawaii). **Brandon Emerson** is a senior software engineer with the R&D department of Intervoice. **Tammy Turner** has a 5-year-old daughter and is teaching high school math in Spokane, Washington, after receiving a Master's in Education at Eastern Washington University and teaching and coaching. **Glen Olney** mentioned his latest book is available, "Coach Catfish Smith And His Boys". **Pam Siems** continues working at L3-Communications in Greenville.

Previously Retired Faculty

John Davenport reports that "as much as I miss seeing all of you each day and as much as I miss visiting with students, I am not missing the day-to-day classroom part of teaching . . . After forty years of teaching it was definitely time to turn in my red pen!" John had his first grandson in May and first granddaughter in August. His grandson is in

Rowlett, and he has made two trips to Georgia to visit his granddaughter. He and Donna recently returned from a wonderful trip to Yosemite National Park. He adds, "sometime this fall my hope is to travel to Maryland to make sure that Dr. Simonelli is not spending too much time at his new office."

Vance Underhill notes that he tries to get plenty of exercise: yard work, tennis, or walking, and adds "I'm involved in church work and Rotary. I try to take at least one nice trip each year. I just got back from a ten-day excursion on the West Coast, Seattle down to San Francisco. We saw Washington, Oregon, and Northern California (sequoias and wine country). I get together with my daughter and son-in-law a couple of times a month since they live in Dallas."

Howard Lambert reports that on August 31 he and Freda celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Since retirement, they travel quite a bit in their 5th Wheel Trailer. They have just returned from a trip through Arkansas, Minnesota, a stop at John Heath's home place in North Dakota, a visit with their son and daughter-in-law in Helena MT., back through Colorado and home.

Dale Bedgood and his wife Betty continue to be active in the local community and University, and the First Baptist Church. They have traveled quite a bit in the recent months: in June they went on a 14-day tour of Ireland, flying to Shannon and then by bus to Galway, Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, Blarney, and Killarney, seeing many historical and ancient sights. In January, they flew to Oahu, then traveled by cruise ship and toured four of the Hawaiian islands. Dale also writes "We've been enjoying our grandson, Colton, who is 2 years old. We have had lots of fun having him in our home."

Jack Lamb is quite active in his local Lions Club serving as webmaster, newsletter editor, occasional photographer, and secretary, and besides local meetings has been to the International Convention in Boston. He is also his church's webmaster, and edits and copies the tapes of the church service on Sunday to take to the shut ins and nursing home members of the church. Last November he and Mildred took a cruise out of Galveston to the Panama Canal, stopping at Costa Rica, Jamaica and the Caymans on the way. "The canal looked small from the ship, but once we got off to look around, it was huge. A fantastic feat of engineering." Jack continues attending MAA meetings; last April was his 38th consecutive meeting of the Texas Section. Jack and his wife, daughter and grandson went to Space Camp in Huntsville, AL in June, and he adds "It was great to get back to Huntsville for another Parent-Child weekend. I took my older grandson there in 1993". In July, he and Mildred and a grandson took a bus tour of Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse Memorial, the Badlands of South Dakota, Deadwood, Cody, Yellowstone, Jackson Hole and Salt Lake City. In December he and Mildred plan a cruise out of Galveston to Cancun, Jamaica and the Caymans with Mildred's cancer support group. Jack adds, "Next year, I plan to attend the Texas Section meeting in Edinburg. I plan to present a paper on a number puzzle I analyzed to see why it worked. I hope it will be a fun talk."

Dates to Remember: The annual joint meetings of the MAA and AMS are January 5-8th, 2007 in New Orleans. The annual meeting of the Texas Section of the MAA will be at the University of Texas – Pan American in Edinburg, sometime this spring. (www.maa.org).

Foundation and Scholarship News

We are most thankful for friends of the department who over the years have helped countless students with their mathematical careers. Current (Fall 2006) recipients are:

Joshua Patterson—**Rachel Lafferty Excellence** honoree

Katsuhiro Iwao—**Bill, Gloria and James Aslan Scholarship**

Holly Stovall—**Dennis Grantham Graduate Math Scholarship**

Sarah Muehlenbein—**Cecil Wright Mathematics Scholarship**

Timothy Payne—**Hoyle & Ann Oglesby Julian Scholarship**

Zackery Mikeska—**W.W. "Bub" Taylor Scholarship**

Alaina Gillick, Mark Ellermann and Zackery Mikeska—**Rachel Lafferty Scholars**

The **John and Elaine Yznaga Scholarship** and **Dale & Betty Bedgood** scholarship will be used for recruitment of top high school and transfer student prospects this fall.

If you wish to make contributions to any of these funds, you may call the Department at 903.886.5157 or the A&M-Commerce Foundation at 903.886.5712

Let Us Hear From You

We would like to hear from all of our former students. Whether you used slide rules or calculators in the classroom, attended ET or A&M-Commerce, we are interested in what has happened in your life since you left campus. If you have a story about a favorite professor, we would like to hear that too. Please fill out the form below and return it to the Math Department so your information can be included in the next *Aftermath Newsletter*.

Name: _____

Address (for our files): _____

_____

City, State & Zip: _____

Degree: _____ Year Graduated: _____

Email address: _____

Please list any promotions, career changes, achievements, awards, or personal news that you would like to share:

_____

_____

Send to the **Mathematics Department**, Texas A&M University-Commerce, P. O. Box 3011, Commerce, TX 75429-3011
or via email to ***Richard_Kreminski@tamu-commerce.edu***

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Homecoming Brunch

The nineteenth annual Mathematics Homecoming Student/Alumni Brunch (formerly Breakfast) will be held at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, October 28, 2006 in the Bluebonnet room of the Sam Rayburn Memorial Student Center. **Please send in your reservations by October 25, 2006**. The cost is FREE(!) to alumni, special friends of the math department, and their guests—but only if we know ahead of time (for catering purposes).

Name: _____

Address (for our files): _____

_____

City, State & Zip: _____

Email address: _____

Please reserve _____ places at the Homecoming Breakfast on October 28.

Please return to:

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or via email to ***Richard_Kreminski@tamu-commerce.edu***